

Message Text

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42

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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R 161620Z OCT 75
FM AMEMBASSY VALLETTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6494

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 VALLETTA 1223

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PFOR, MILI, MT
SUBJECT: PROPOSED ELLSWORTH VISIT TO MALTA

REF: STATE 243475

1. SUMMARY: MINTOFF REACTED ANGRILY TO THE SUGGESTION IN MR. ELLSWORTH'S REPLY THAT THEY DISCUSS THE POSSIBILITY OF RENEWING THE PATTERN OF CALLS IN MALTA BY UNITS OF OUR SIXTH FLEET HE WARNED AGAINST ANY TUG OF WAR BETWEEN THE US AND THE USSR OVER MALTA AND SAID IT APPEARED THAT WE WANTED MALTA NOT AS A FRIEND BUT AS A "PROSTITUTE". THIS HE FIRMLY REJECTED. HE TICKED OFF A NUMBER OF OTHER COMPLAINTS OF "SHABBY TREATMENT" BY THE US, INCLUDING HIS NOT BEING INVITED TO WASHINGTON AND SECRETARY KISSINGER'S INABILITY THUS FAR TO VISIT MALTA. HE CLAIMED THE US REPUBLICAN PARTY IS SUPPORTING THE NATIONALIST OPPOSITION HERE. HE ALSO PROTESTED A RECENT STATEMENT BY AN AMERICAN CONGRESSMAN AT THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE AND ARTICLES IN TWO AMERICAN MAGAZINES. ALTHOUGH MR. ELLSWORTHS PROPOSED VISIT TO MALTA IS A NON-STARTER FOR THE MOMENT MINTOFF MAY ASK TO HAVE THE CONDITION OF A SIXTH FLEET DISCUSSION REMOVED AND THEN RENEW THE INVITATION. HE ATTACHES GREAT IMPORTANCE TO HIGH-LEVEL TALKS WITH POLICY-MAKING US OFFICIALS.
END SUMMARY

2. I CALLED ON MINTOFF AFTERNOON OCTOBER 15 TO GIVE
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HIM THE TEXT OF ELLSWORTH'S REPLY TO HIS INVITATION.

HE RECEIVED ME WARMLY BUT COOLED CONSIDERABLY AFTER HE READ THE TEXT OF THE MESSAGE. INITIALLY, HE ACTED TO ELLSWORTH'S SUGGESTION OF DISCUSSING THE POSSIBILITY OF RENEWING SIXTH FLEET CALLS IN MALTA WITH DISAPPOINTMENT--MORE IN SORROW THAN IN ANGER. HE BECAME MORE AND MORE AGITATED AND UPSET AS HE REFLECTED ON THE SUBJECT, HOWEVER, AND FINALLY REFERRED TO IT AS A CONDITION WHICH WAS "IMPOSSIBLE, EMBARRASSING AND HUMILIATING." MY COMMENT THAT SIMPLY DISCUSSING THE SUBJECT WITH ELLSWORTH WOULD NOT NECESSARILY IMPLY ANY COMMITMENT ON HIS PART DID NOT MOLLIFY HIM.

3. MINTOFF SAID HE WANTED TO TALK TO ELLSWORTH ABOUT PEACE, NOT WAR. HE BELIEVES THAT "NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEACE IN THE MEDITERRANEAN WERE BEING LOST" AND EMPHASIZED THAT HE WAS IN CLOSE TOUCH NOT ONLY WITH THE "EXISTING POWERS" IN THE MEDITERRANEAN BUT ALSO "WITH THOSE WHO LIKELY TO TAKE OVER VERY SOON." HE WOULD NOT BE MORE SPECIFIC. HE HAD HOPED TO DISCUSS THESE MATTERS IN A FREE AND OPEN MANNER, WITH EMPHASIS UPON THE PARTS MALTA AND THE US COULD PLAY. HE CONTINUED TO HOPE TO FORGE STRONGER LINKS OF FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN OUR COUNTRIES--REAL FRIENDSHIP AND NOT ONE BASED ON MILITARY FACTORS.

4. REPEATEDLY THUMPING HIS FINGER ON THE OFFENDING PARAGRAPH IN ELLSWORTH'S LETTER, MINTOFF SAID HE REGRETTED THAT WE HAD SEEN FIT TO IMPOSE SUCH A CONDITION WHICH HE FOUND BOTH EMBARRASSING AND POTENTIALLY EVEN DANGEROUS. HE BELIEVED THAT IF THE FACT THAT HE WAS HAVING SUCH A DISCUSSION ABOUT THE US SIXTH FLEET WERE LEAKED, IT WOULD DO SERIOUS DAMAGE NOT ONLY TO MALTA BUT TO THE US AS WELL. "WHY PICK ON MALTA?" HE ASKED. THERE ARE MANY COUNTRIES IN THE MEDITERRANEAN BASIN. TO DISCUSS THIS NOW WITH THE US WOULD REFLECT ON MALTA'S GROWING REPUTATION FOR INTEGRITY AND SINCERITY. HE COULD NOT MAKE THAT SACRIFICE AND WOULD PREFER INSTEAD NOT TO TALK AT ALL. THE AMERICAN PREOCCUPATION WITH THE SIXTH FLEET INDICATED TO HIM THAT WE WERE NOT SERIOUSLY INTERESTED IN MALTA'S

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FRIENDSHIP BUT RATHER IN SEEING MALTA BECOME A "PROSTITUTE".

5. WITH SOME DIFFICULTY, I INTERJECTED THAT THIS WAS EMPHASICALLY NOT THE CASE AND THAT WE PLACED REAL VALUE ON MALTA'S FRIENDSHIP. MINTOFF SAID HE FOUND THIS DIFFICULT TO BELIEVE IN THE ABSENCE OF "ANY SIGNS OF GOOD WILL" FROM THE US. WARMING TO HIS SUBJECT, MINTOFF

THEN RECITED A LONG LITANY OF COMPLAINTS, SOME NEW AND SOME OLD--SOME REAL AND SOME IMAGINED. HE SAID HAROLD WILSON AND SEVERAL OTHER COMMONWEALTH PRIME MINISTERS HAD RECEIVED INVITATIONS TO VISIT WASHINGTON FOLLOWING THEIR CONFERENCE IN JAMAICA. HE HAD RECEIVED NO SUCH INVITATION AND FELT "INSULTED" AS A RESULT. DESPITE SECRETARY KISSINGER'S FREQUENT VISITS TO EUROPE AND THE MIDDLE EAST, HE HAD NEVER FOUND TIME TO VISIT MALTA. HE BRUSHED ASIDE MY REMINDER THAT ONLY MINTOFF'S ILLNESS HAD PREVENTED A MEETING WITH THE SECRETARY IN HELSINKI WITH THE COMMENT THAT SUCH A MEETING COULD NOT HAVE BEEN VERY SATISFACTORY IN ANY CASE BECAUSE OF THE TIME LIMITATIONS IMPOSED BY THE LARGE NUMBER OF HIGH-LEVEL DELEGATES.

6. MINTOFF SAID HE WAS BEGINNING TO FEEL THAT WE WERE TREATING HIM LIKE A CRIMINAL. EVEN GETTING US VISAS FOR HIS DELEGATION IN JAMAICA TO TRANSIT NEW YORK AFTER THE COMMONWEALTH CONFERENCE WAS "HUMILIATING", ESPECIALLY SINCE MALTA REQUIRES NO VISA FROM AMERICAN CITIZENS. ONCE IN NEW YORK, HE AGAIN RECEIVED "SHABBY TREATMENT" AND WAS NOT RECEIVED PROPERLY BY AN HIGH-LEVEL US OFFICIAL. I EXPRESSED MY REGRET THAT HE HAD FELT SLIGHTED IN ANY WAY AND ASSURED HIM THAT NO SLIGHT HAD BEEN INTENDED AND THAT APPROPRIATE COURTESIES WOULD HAVE BEEN EXTENDED HAD WE BEEN NOTIFIED IN TIME OF HIS TRANSIT. MINTOFF SAID AMPLE NOTIFICATION HAD BEEN MADE AND REPATED THAT HE RESENTED SUCH TREATMENT. (COMMENT: FACTS OF THIS MINI-FLAP WERE REPORTED IN VALLETTA 0563 AND KINGSTON 2016. FOREIGN SECRETARY ABELA HAD TOLD ME EARLIER THAT NOTIFICATION OF THE LAST MINUTE CHANGE IN TRAVEL PLANS HAD BEEN MADE TO MALTA'S UN DELEGATION IN NEW YORK ON THE NIGHT BEFORE

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THEIR ARRIVAL. THE MALTESE DELEGATION IN TURN, HE SAID, HAD NOTIFIED AN OFFICER IN USUN.)

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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R 161620Z OCT 75
FM AMEMBASSY VALLETTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6495

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 VALLETTA 01223

EXDIS

7. RETURNING AGAIN TO THE SIXTH FLEET ISSUE, MINTOFF SAID HE SIMPLY WOULD NOT PERMIT A "CONTEST" BETWEEN THE US AND THE USSR OVER MALTA. "DON'T FORCE US TO CHOOSE BETWEEN THE SUPERPOWERS," HE SAID. SUCH A TUG OF WA WOULD NOT BE IN THE INTEREST OF EITHER THE US OR MALTA--EXPECIALLY SINCE HE BELIEVED THAT "THE SOVIETS WOULD WIN". HE DID NOT WANT THIS TO HAPPEN ANY MORE THAN WE DID AND SAID FLATLY THAT "THERE IS NO COMMUNIST INFLUENCE IN MALTA" DESPITE WHAT SOME AMERICAN POLITICIANS APPARENTLY BELIEVE. IN THIS CONNECTION HE HAD INFORMATION THAT THE US REPUBLICAN PARTY HAD BEEN IN CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE NATIONALIST OPPOSITION IN MALTA AND THAT IT WAS CONTRIBUTING FUNDS TO THE NATIONALISTS. HE OBJECTED VIGOROUSLY TO THIS. I SAID I HAD NO INFORMATION WHATEVER ABOUT REPUBLICAN CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE NATIONALISTS BUT THAT OUR POLICY WAS IN ANY CASE ONE OF SCRUPULOUS NEUTRALITY IN THE COMING ELECTION. HE WAS ALSO CRITICAL OF THE COMMENTS REPORTEDLY MADE BY CONGRESSMAN LEO J. RYAN (D-CALIF.) ABOUT MALTA AT THE RECENT PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE (VALLETTA 1222). MINTOFF SAID THE VERY FACT THAT MALTESE NATIONALIST MPS WERE PERMITTED TO MAKE SUCH CRITICAL COMMENTS IN A FOREIGN FORUM WAS AMPLY EVIDENCE OF THE FACT THAT MALTA WAS NOT A DICTATORSHIP. HE SAID CONGRESSMAN RYAN'S COMMENTS WERE NOT HELPING MALTESE-AMERICAN RELATIONS AND HOPED THE EMBASSY COULD "SET HIM STRAIGHT". HE INTERRUPTED
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MY EXPLANATION OF THE INDEPENDENCE OF AMERICAN CONGRESSMEN WITH A FINAL COMPLAINT ABOUT TWO RECENT ARTICLES IN AMERICAN MAGAZINES (BUSINESS WEEK AND THE JOURNAL OF COMMERCE) WHICH HAD BEEN LESS THAN ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT THE BUSINESS AND INVESTMENT CLIMATE IN MALTA. HE HOPED THE EMBASSY COULD ASSIST IN "CORRECTING" SUCH ARTICLES.

8. DESPITE THE TONE OF THE ABOVE, MINTOFF CLOSED ON A SOMEWHAT MORE CONCILIATORY NOTE, EMPHASIZING AGAIN HIS PERSONAL FRIENDSHIP FOR MR. ELLSWORTH AND HIS DESIRE FOR GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE US. THIS, HE SAID, WAS REFLECTED BY THE VERY FACT OF HIS RECEIVING ME AND NOT THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR ONLY A FEW DAYS EARLIER (VALLETTA 1216). HE WAS CONVINCED THAT THE INTERESTS OF MALTA AND THE US COINCIDED IN THE MEDITERRANEAN, BUT ONLY IF "WE ARE TREATED AS HUMAN BEINGS AND NOT AS PROSTITUTES." THIS MEANS THAT HE AS THE POLICY-MAKER IN MALTA SHOULD HAVE TALKS WITH US POLICY-MAKERS AS HE DOES IN OTHER COUNTRIES, NOT JUST WITH THE AMBASSADOR. HE AGAIN REGRETTED THAT THE SIXTH FLEET CONDITION HAD BEEN IMPOSED IN ELLSWORTH'S LETTER AND SAID THAT HE WOULD BE RESPONDING DIRECTLY TO MR. ELLSWORTH BY A PERSONAL LETTER IN DUE COURSE.

9. COMMENT: MINTOFF SAID HE WAS FULLY RECEIVED FROM HIS RECENT ILLNESS BUT LOOKED QUITE FATIGUED. AS WILL BE SEEN FROM THE ABOVE, HOWEVER, THIS DID NOT INHIBIT HIS USUAL FORCEFUL AND DYNAMIC STYLE. THE SIXTH FLEET REFERENCE STRUCK A RAW NERVE IN HIM AND HE USED THE OPPORTUNITY GET A LOT OF THINGS OFF HIS CHEST. HIS KING-SIZED EGO HAS BEEN BRUISED, AND HIS OBSESSION TO TALK WITH SECRETARY KISSINGER IS ONLY INTENSIFIED AS THE GENERAL ELECTION APPROACHES. AS WE HAVE REPORTED EARLIER, HIS VIEWS ON KEEPING THE US AND SOVIET FLEETS OUT OF MALTA ARE FIRM AND, WE BELIEVE, GENUINE. ALTHOUGH IT IS DIFFICULT TO PREDICT HOW HE WILL EVENTUALLY RESPOND TO ELLSWORTH, IT IS PROBABLE THAT HE WILL RENEW THE INVITATION PROVIDING THE SIXTH FLEET DISCUSSION CONDITION IS DROPPED.

10. DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS TO ASSISTANT SECRETARY
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ELLSWORTH.SMITH

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, MILITARY VISITS, INVITATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 16 OCT 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CunninFX
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975VALLET01223
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750359-0831
From: VALLETTA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19751049/aaaabrra.tel
Line Count: 264
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 75 STATE 243475
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 12 MAY 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <12 MAY 2003 by izenbei0>; APPROVED <30 SEP 2003 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PROPOSED ELLSWORTH VISIT TO MALTA
TAGS: PFOR, MILI, MT, (ELLSWORTH)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006